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ARGENTINA: HUMAN RIGHTS

AL100

The human rights situation in Argentina still involves gross violations. However, on June 15 it was reported that 342 prisoners would be released from executive custody. The Embassy believes that most of these prisoners were in fact either freed or charged formally but could only confirm a handful. It seems possible that the Argentine government will restore a limited form of "right of option," whereby some state of siege prisoners may seek voluntary exile. There are also signs that Argentine President Videla may be gaining support from other generals for a greater ventilation of political ideas with civilian leaders.

Despite these positive developments, widespread human rights violations continue. The Argentine government continues to refuse to acknowledge the names of thousands of political prisoners under detention; disappearances, summary executions, torture and prolonged periods of incommunication are undeniable and continue. Due process guarantees have also been suspended. Government officials claim that the terrorists pose a grave threat to Argentine society, and that counter-terrorist violations of human rights are therefore justified. The terrorist threat to Argentine security, however, has been greatly diminished.

In addition to continuing flagrant violations of the integrity of the person, Argentina has also suspended principle civil and political rights such as freedom of expression and assembly, and the right to participate in the political process. Official violence has spread recently, partly as a result of internal struggles within the military. Within recent weeks, Argentina's Ambassador to Venezuela, a moderate political figure, was kidnapped in Buenos Aires, at least five labor leaders were warned to leave Argentina, and a prominent Jewish leader fled the country after being threatened.

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ( ) In Part (X) In Full

( ) Classify as ( ) Extend as ( ) Downgrade to

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Declassify on \_\_\_\_\_ Reason \_\_\_\_\_

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